

THE
RELIGIOUS
AND
LITERARY REPOSITORY.



EDITED BY A SOCIETY OF LAYMEN, MEMBERS OF THE PROTESTANT EPISCOPAL CHURCH.

NO. 16.]

ANNAPOLEIS, AUGUST 19, 1820.

[VOL. I.

TERMS:

The Repository is published twice a month, at Two Dollars per annum—Payable in advance.

PRINTED BY J. GREEN.

From the Christian Observer.

A Father's account of his Daughter.

My daughter A. was impressed from her infancy with a serious sense of eternal things, so that the work of grace upon her heart was such as our Lord describes in one of his parables. *So is the kingdom of God as if a man should cast seed into the ground, and should sleep and rise night and day, and the seed should spring up he knoweth not how. For the earth bringeth forth fruit of herself, first the blade, then the ear, after that the full corn in the ear.* Mark iv. 26.

Here it may not be improper to remark, that when the Spirit of God makes use of education as the means of producing sound conversion, we are not always to expect such a sudden change of conduct as we see happily to take place in some who have lived in the contempt or neglect of religion. The seed instilled by the care of a parent or guardian, and watered with daily prayers and instructions, groweth up we know not how, but bringeth forth in the end the genuine fruits of righteousness. Those who have been thus gradually led to a right faith in Jesus Christ, and a sincere dedication of themselves to his service, ought not to be disturbed be-

cause they cannot fix on any distinct period of their lives, when their views and tempers were suddenly changed. If such persons, from a consciousness of their guilt and innate depravity, have fled to Christ for refuge from the curse of God's law; if their hopes of justification and salvation are fixed on the merits of their Redeemer; and if the love of God and of all mankind is truly shed abroad in their hearts; they have reason to rejoice in God as their Saviour, and to look forward with a confident hope of future glory.

My daughter A. was in many respects a pattern to the younger part of the family. She was diligent, frugal, and industrious, while she was at school; and continued to be so when she had arrived at adult age.

The temper of her mind, with respect to spiritual things at this period of life, will be most clearly shewn by a few extracts from the papers found in her bureau after her death. To which I must add, that her conduct was conformable to these private thoughts.

Her watchfulness over her own heart, appears from the following observations which she had made upon herself. "I want to feel a more universal love to God, that all my actions may be governed by that—my thoughts and my affections. I find dispositions rising

daily which are contrary to this. I seem to want to *appear religious*, and to be thought well of; and because one in the family behaves towards me as if he thought I was very loose in my notions of religion, I find great risings against him. This is an unchristian temper. If I had that humility which the Gospel requires, I should know, that no opinion of me is too mean. My corrupt nature rebels against this; and this will hinder my growth in grace, if not subdued. O God, thy power alone can work a true change in me, and subdue my heart to thee."

Again she writes thus—"I fear I do many times dishonour God, by a very hasty temper. If I were truly humble, should I be so soon hurt and put out of temper, by any little incivility? Oh, I desire it, that whenever I give way to this disposition, I may suffer from it, and feel how hateful it is in God's sight."

Her watchfulness over the state of her mind in company, appears from the following remark. "I have this day had some friends with me who are quite worldly people; and though our conversation has had, I trust, nothing inconsistent with godliness in it, yet my heart has not been with God. O dreadful state of insensibility!"

On this head, I find the following remark, either made by herself, or extracted from some author she had been reading. "Those christians who are unavoidably obliged to be sometimes in the company of the ungodly, will never have peace in their own minds, if they do not deal faithfully with such."

Her earnest desires after holiness, are shewn in such reflections as these —"I want a principle of godliness in the soul at all times guiding me." "I trust I can say with sincerity,

that it is, and shall be, my endeavour to strive against sin."

"I find that I have been expecting and desiring to be impelled by the influence of God's Spirit, to do his will, without giving myself the pain of striving to overcome by grace.

"Instead of *resolving* to give up my own *ease and pleasure*, rather than not do my duty to God and man; I seem to leave that determination till the trial should come. O God, give me power and strength to do *all thy will*, however contrary to flesh and blood."

Her watchfulness over her mind, in prayer and other religious exercises, appears from the following reflections upon her own conduct.

"Sunday noon. I have attended to the prayers this morning—my thoughts did not wander much; but it was no worship of the *heart*. My heart did not go along with the words. I thought I never shall overcome this deadness. When I thought this, I was trusting to my own strength; but Christ can be my strength to overcome every thing. O God, by thy spirit, enable me to see Christ as *my strength*. Let not Satan tempt me to give up all, by leading me to look for deliverance from *my own efforts*. They are weakness," &c.

Some forms of prayer were found written in a small book, which seemed to have been much used.

She had begun a kind of common place book of the scriptures, with the view of extracting and classing under proper heads, such passages as she judged most applicable to her own case, and suitable to advance the Christian life. The heads were such as these—"The passages of Scripture which excite confidence in God."—"The promises of God to those who are desirous to love him, and to those who have chosen

him for their God." She had also written out many passages, describing the distinguishing characters of the children of God.

These short extracts will serve to convey some idea how the days of her youth were spent.

When she was twenty-three years of age, she was seized with a spitting of blood, which brought her life into some danger. However, it pleased God at that time to restore her health; but the disease returned in her twenty-sixth year, and brought on a consumption, which proved fatal to her soon after she had completed that year.

Soon after her recovery from the former attack, her mind was much exercised for some time with a trial of too delicate a nature to be minutely related. Suffice it to say, that a considerable struggle took place, in which religion triumphed over a temporary affection.

Whether this struggle had, in any degree, diminished her usual firmness of mind, or whether the trouble which she afterwards experienced was purely of a spiritual nature, I cannot determine: however, a little before the attack of her last illness, she was harassed with violent temptations to despair. The great enemy of souls was permitted to assault her with ideas of the most distressing kind. She was led to doubt the reality of her former experience. She feared she had been a hypocrite before God, and this terrified her to a very high degree. Her sleep was broken, and the agonies of her mind sometimes made her body tremble. I shall never forget the state of agitation, during which she entered my study one morning early, to communicate to me her fears of eternal perdition and to beg my prayers.

In this furnace of affliction her gracious Saviour meant, I doubt not, to purify her soul; and, indeed, she came out of it as gold purified in the fire. As her disease increased, the tranquility of her mind was restored; and she was at last enabled to rejoice in God her Saviour.

(To be continued)

From Bishop Wilson—“On Securing the Fellowship of the Holy Ghost.”

It is too plain and sad a truth to be denied, that all are not Christians *indeed* who yet own the truth of the Gospel, and are persuaded of the necessity of obeying it, and have embraced its profession. Not that the Holy Ghost denies his grace, to any that are dedicated to Him, in baptism; but men thrust Him from them; refuse to ask His assistance; grieve Him, by their evil deeds, and force Him to forsake them, and to leave them to themselves, and to the government of evil spirits, who walk about like roaring lions, seeking whom they may be permitted to devour, finding them forsaken of God, and prepared for destruction.

That Christians may not be mistaken, and lay too much stress upon their being made in baptism, *children of God, and Heirs of the kingdom of Heaven*, without taking great care to live like children of so holy a Father, and like people who hope to go to Heaven; the sacred Scriptures have most particularly set down, the marks and characters of such Christians as may hope for benefit by their Christian profession. *If any man hath not the Spirit of Christ, saith St. Paul, he is none of His. If we live in the Spirit, let us walk in the Spirit. As many, as are led by the Spirit of God, they (and they only) are the sons of God.* They only can call God *Father*, so as to be heard by Him, so as to have their prayers

answered, and so as to be rewarded by Him.

And that Christians may not fancy that they are led by the Spirit of God, when indeed they are not, the same Apostle sets down, in plain terms, what are the fruits of the Spirit of God, or of one that is led by the Spirit of God. *The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, long suffering, courteousness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance.*

Men are not masters of themselves. Led they must be, either by the spirit and powers of darkness, or by the Spirit of God. It is for this reason, that God, for Christ's sake, has given us the earnest of his Spirit in baptism; with this assurance, that he who submits to be governed by His Spirit, and brings forth fruit worthy of such a favour, shall have still greater favours conferred upon him; *but he that is not careful to improve the graces God gives him, from him shall be taken away, even what was before bestowed upon him.*

If men, notwithstanding this caution given them, will be making experiments, how far they may neglect their duty, without losing the earnest of God's Spirit—if they will try to govern themselves by their own reason and wisdom, laying aside the laws of God, why then they may indeed, take themselves from under God's oversight and direction: but servants still they must be, and led they must be by the spirit and powers of darkness; they only change masters, (for a master they must have,) and how much for the worse, sad experience will soon show!

It is for this reason, that humility and care and watchfulness, are so much recommended in Scripture; lest Christians should grow conceited of their own wisdom, and ability

to govern themselves; lest they should neglect the means of grace, which God has already given them; and lest, being often off their guard, the devil should at last be permitted to take them into his kingdom and service; *whence they cannot return to God, when they please, no more than a dead man can return to life by his own power.* And this is the true reason why neither advice, nor authority, neither the hopes of Heaven, nor the fears of Hell, can prevail with some sinners to forsake their evil ways: They are not their own masters, they are servants to one, who will not suffer them to return to sober reason; they have forsaken God, and God has given them up to a reprobate mind, *a mind void of judgment;* so that they commit iniquity with greediness, and though they see that ruin attends it.

On the other hand, such as are led by the Spirit of God, do experience his assistance in the whole course of their lives; enlightening their understandings, convincing their judgments, awakening their consciences, curing the perverseness of their nature, and filling their souls with all those graces and virtues which are necessary to fit men for Heaven. Hence, it comes to pass, that men, who *of themselves,* are not able to think one good thought, yet by God's grace and spirit do very plainly perceive the excellency of religion and piety, the folly and unreasonableness of sin, the happiness that attends the one, and the misery that must be the reward of the other.

Hence it comes to pass, that a poor weak creature, assisted by the Spirit of God, is able to resist the prince of darkness with all his host of evil angels. Hence it is, that man who is naturally proud and obstinate, is yet brought to humble

himself before God, acknowledge his own nothingness, confess his sinfulness, and that he merits nothing but misery. Hence it is, that man, who is naturally blind and ignorant in the things which most nearly concern his eternal welfare, yet when enlightened by the Spirit of God, can very readily apprehend divine truths, can see the wisdom and goodness and love of God, in all that he has commanded or requires of us; and hence it is, that true Christians, those with whom the Spirit of God really dwells, and who suffer themselves to be led by Him, are brought to embrace doctrines so very uneasy to flesh and blood, so very unacceptable to corrupt reason. *Blessed are they that mourn; blessed are the poor in spirit. Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that use you spitefully.*

Now, forasmuch as Christians are but too apt to fall into a carnal security, they ought often to try whether they have the Spirit of God dwelling in them, or whether they have not lost, or are in danger of losing so necessary a guide? But how must they do this? Why they must have such marks as cannot possibly deceive any, except those, who are willing to be deceived. We do not bid them, for instance, to look to their own inward experiences, since even good men often lament their want of faith, even when they are supported by it, and many fancy themselves to have the spirit of God, when a worse spirit governs them.

The sure way by which to ascertain whether they have the spirit of God, is to consider the fruits which the spirit which possesseth all them, produces in them—namely whether their great aims and designs, are to seek this world's happiness, or to please God, and to secure the fellowship of his Holy spirit unto their lives end.

This every body is capable of knowing, who will be at the pains of searching the bottom of his own heart. If he find that his thoughts are chiefly upon another world, and that this so affects his heart, that his endeavours after holiness are incere; then he may be well assured *all is well with him.* If we are led by the Spirit of God, to walk worthy of Him, that hath called us, we may be satisfied in our minds, that we are under God's protection, guidance and favour.

How may we secure the fellowship of the Holy Ghost which we received in baptism unto our lives end?

1st. Though we owe all the grace which God has given us to his Holy Spirit, and must always depend upon Him for the continuance of it, yet we must still exert our best endeavours, in the use of those means which God has ordained, in order to fit us for Heaven. At the same time, that the Scriptures bid us to depend upon God, they exhort us to *work out our own salvation*, that is on our part to do all that God, by his preventing grace, has convinced us we ought to do, and which by his assisting grace, He will enable us to do, if we will sincerely ask his help.

2ndly. That we may secure the presence and assistance of God's Spirit, we must be careful to mind his godly admonitions, exciting us to our duty, checking us when we are doing amiss, and comforting us when we do what pleaseth God. Not to do this is *doing despite to the Spirit of Grace; resisting the Holy Ghost.*

Lastly. We must, above all things, be careful not to grieve and provoke Him to forsake us, by sensuality, by uncleanness, or by living in any known sin, or even by an

undue application to and an affection for earthly things, which our Lord assures us *will choke the word* and the Spirit, (by which it becomes a means of Grace,) and it will become unfruitful.

If to this we add our sincere prayers, out of a sense of our own inability, and God's readiness to help us, through the mediation of Jesus Christ, we shall then be secure of the assistance of God's Holy Spirit.

And now you see the necessity of *Christian baptism*, by which we have the Spirit given to us; without which Spirit it is impossible for any man to work out his own salvation. You see the reason why very many, though they have received the earnest of God's Spirit in baptism, yet are as wicked as those who never heard, whether there was any Holy Spirit or not. They have neglected His motions, they have grieved Him, by their evil deeds, they have forced Him from them, and are become servants of another master, whose delight is in wickedness. You see also the necessity of *walking warily*, lest by adding one sin to another we provoke God to leave us to ourselves; for then you have been told, who it is that immediately takes possession of us.

You see of what little use it is to be convinced of the truth of the Christian religion, if we do not seriously apply to the Spirit for Grace to live as becomes the Gospel of Christ. You see the danger of neglecting the means of grace, which the providence of God affords us—it is the ready way to be forsaken of God and left to ourselves.

Let us therefore not flatter ourselves in a concern of so great moment. A wicked life is a sure mark that men do not belong to God. In

this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil; whosoever doeth not righteousness is not of God.

From Bean on Family Worship.

TRUE piety is a principle which leads a man to honour God in every thing. It will have an influence upon him abroad and at home, upon common as well as extraordinary occasions.

It is this principle which leads a christian to exercise a religious care over his family. Every wise man sees the necessity of having some plan of domestic government, in order to preserve his house from being a scene of confusion and misery. And by what expedient can a christian better accomplish this purpose, than by endeavouring that every member of his family should feel the force of those principles by which he himself is made holy and happy? Children and servants are influenced by what is always addressing itself to them. They judge of things not from what one man says one day in a week, but from what every person is saying every day. The customs, the habits of the family are the things which form their character; and if among these there be no act which is intended to do honour to religion, there is not only nothing done to carry on the design of public instruction, but many things which will defeat that design.

It is from neglecting to follow public with private instruction, among other causes that a standing ministry in the church, does not produce all the good effects for which it was ordained. They who object to this institution should consider the limits of the public instructor's power; and in estimating the

useful tendency of his office, they ought to allow for the failure of those who should take up the duty for which he is set apart, at that point beyond which he cannot proceed.

The true minister of Christ is ever labouring to bring masters of families to carry the work of instruction into their own province. It is not a crowded auditory that satisfies him. He will be ready to weep over the multitudes, that he views from the pulpit, if he know that though they seem to hang upon his lips, there is at home no alter, no priest, no sacrifice, nor one true sign of genuine piety to be found. *He estimates his usefulness in his pastoral character, not merely by the number of his hearers, but by the practical effect which his discourses have on them.* And among other enquiries in order to ascertain this effect, he endeavours to know whether there be any family religion among them. When he sees religion in their houses, he has reason to conclude it has properly affected their hearts. But while religion is absent there, he considers that however he may be commended as a preacher he has reason to doubt whether after all, his labours have produced any great effect upon his hearers. To the due performance of all the duties which this paper aims to enforce, there is one thing very essential. *The master of the family must consider himself as the minister of God to his household.* I would exhort him to cherish this idea of himself and to pray earnestly to God that he may with all humility act up to this character. If he be desirous of so doing he will be ready to take advantage of every circumstance that occurs in his family by which he may seriously affect those who live with him. Such an opportunity is

afforded by a remarkable escape from some impending evil, sickness, recovery, or death. These are instructive events and he should be ready to accompany them with something in his family worship, suited to improve to the best purposes, the impressions which such things make on the minds of his household.

When these duties are wisely and diligently performed, the public instructor rejoices in seeing the fruit of his labours. "But what fruit of them, is he likely to discover among those families in which the domestics neither see, nor hear any thing that is calculated to remind them of the public worship or that does any way correspond with it? They will think (if they think at all upon the subject) that religion consists in nothing but going to Church; for they see nothing more in the religion of the master. The most solemn and approved things may be made sport of by some; but let us consider how they are regarded, by other observers. Is it not a beautiful sight to see a pious man collect his domestics around him—open his Bible, read distinctly and reverently a portion of that Holy Book, and then kneeling down with them, thankfully acknowledge the blessings by which he and his family have received, and humbly implore the continuance of the Divine mercy? This, (however it may be misrepresented by vain and thoughtless people,) is without doubt in the eye of God and his angels, a dignified spectacle. Where family worship is regularly observed, and its credit is supported by a holy life, a steady conduct, prudent management of worldly affairs, upright dealings and amiable tempers, on the part of him who leads it, there can be no doubt of its proving

beneficial to himself, to his domestics and to society.

It may be, that even where great pains have been taken to train children in the *fear of God*, the world will sometimes triumph over the Instructor—bearing away by the force of its allurements, the well tutored child, in defiance of the counsels, the example and the prayers of the wise and good parent. It must be allowed likewise, that the bad courses which some religiously educated children have taken, are to be accounted for in a great measure from the want of correspondence, between the profession and the life, the prayers and the practice of the parent. Among those who profess themselves Christians, we meet with many whose religion is destitute of consistency. Such is the case of those, who though they have prayers in their families, do not accompany these acts of devotion with the maintenance of order, or the firm and temperate exercise of parental authority. Among such persons, there is frequently found a great deficiency in the article of instruction. In a loose and general way perhaps the parent sometimes speaks of the consequences of vice, but does not mark with sufficient earnestness the various forms under which it may appear, nor does he keep a watchful eye over the tempers, the employments and connections of his children, or set before them in his own conduct, the example of a sober, steady and upright character. But let not such an instance be brought to prove the inutility of domestic worship—the proper improvement of the fact is to learn how little good is to be expected, and how much mischief may ensue from a spurious kind of religion. Let parents take heed that they fall not into these errors. Let there be a mixture of devotion, instruction,

government, and example in the superintendence of a family. Let these go hand in hand, and while they support each other they will give stability and comfort to the house, in which they are exercised. It will be the abode of peace. In the superiors will be seen authority tempered with kindness; among the inferiors, sobriety, fidelity, industry and frugality; among them all good will to each other will be visible; notwithstanding, that through the frailty of human nature, there may be occasional interruptions of that harmony, which the religious government of a family tends to produce.

Kirwan—On Future Responsibility.

ALL I will say to this is, that if there be a God above us, He has not placed us on this earth, as mere frail machines, distinguished from the brute by the glorious prerogative of reason, but equally destined to an eternal sleep. There must be after death, rewards for the virtuous and punishments for the wicked; a truth so invincibly supported by the light of reason, and so independent of revelation, that it existed at all times, and among all people, as one of those original impressions that presented themselves with the idea of a Supreme Being. Now it is impossible to conceive any essential difference between good and evil, without the establishment of this truth; or to annex the attributes of justice, wisdom or holiness to the name of God, if we suppose him an indifferent spectator of crimes which he must necessarily abhor: admitting all without distinction to his glory; placing the murderer by the side of his victim, Cain on the same throne with Abel. But whatever common reason may say on this point, it

must be admitted that revelation is dreadfully explicit on it. Indeed the various passages that treat of it, in the old and new testament, can scarcely be contemplated without a shock of the imagination. Not a single want of uniformity appears in any, either as to the certainty of future punishments, or the nature and duration of them. Even Jesus Christ himself, who came to converse with man, in a ministry of mildness and charity, spoke the same inexorable language, and seems specially intent on every occasion to cut up the false confidence of sinners by the roots. Whatever some infatuated christians may promise themselves, or however ingenious they may be, in believing on the easiest terms, that is, on the principle of having nothing to dread; the only positive advantage they can derive from this, is to enjoy the present scene with less disturbance from within. But should the truth lie on the side of sound and unprejudiced reason, and the denunciations of religion absolutely mean what they literally express: in other words should such christians be mistaken on this capital point, surely it is unnecessary to say, that their case is obviously and beyond conception deplorable.

All may be well, as long as the curtain is up, and the puppet show of life goes on. But when the representation comes to a close, and every hope of a longer respite is precluded, let them believe me, that things will appear in a very different light. A death bed is a wonderful reasoner. Many a proud infidel hath it humbled and refuted without a word, who, but a short time before would have defied all the ability of man, to shake the foundation of his system. Would to God I could say that that great and aw-

ful moment were as often distinguished by the dew of repentance as by the groan of despair.

Extracts.

"SHE was sitting pensively near a table; her head resting on her hand; a large book was open before her, on which her eyes were devoutly bent. It was the best comforter of the wretched, the soother, the consoler of the unhappy—the refuge of the sorrowful. It was the Holy Bible. "Come unto me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," she repeated aloud. Yes, continued she, in the bosom of religion alone, can the wretched find consolation and support."

"IF you have sincere desires after faith, you have some beginnings of faith, and therefore improve those desires by making frequent essays to receive Christ, and apply His blood. Believing, is a duty you should be often aiming at, even before you find God's Spirit effectually concurring. Though you cannot pray, or praise, meditate or sanctify the Sabbath aright, without the spirit, yet do not forbear to aim at these duties, even when you find not the Spirit at work. Though you have no power to believe savingly, yet still be aiming at it, praying for it, and seeking it in the word of God. The Spirit will pity your weakness, when you are making honest attempts to do his will. Be aiming therefore to part with your own righteousness, to take a crucified Saviour for your all, to venture your all in his hands. God is able to save us, and is ready at all times, if we be willing to seek salvation in the divinely appointed method. Let us cry to Him for help. The as-

sistance afforded to us will be in proportion to the necessity and the occasion. When the darkness which covereth a land becomes so thick as to make us earnestly desire and importunately to pray for its removal, light shall come suddenly, and perhaps from an unexpected quarter, small indeed and scarcely discernible at first, but gently and gradually increasing, till the darkness vanish, and the perfect day is formed. Above all, let us never despair.—This would only make bad worse. If we once bring ourselves to fancy that no remedy can be found, none ever will be found, *for none ever will be sought in earnest.*

Of the Advantages and Necessity of Revelation.

“IN the beginning God created the Heavens and the Earth.” A child easily repeats and understands these few words of Moses. But the child who does so, is at once in the possession of a truth, which heathen philosophy for ages and generations sought in vain. None could then, with any degree of certainty, determine by whom the world was made; whether it were made at all; whether there were many Gods or one.

If the world were made by a good and gracious God, whence come so much evil as we all see and know to be in it? Here the wisdom of paganism was for ever at a stand. Bewildered and lost in its reasonings and guesses upon the subject, it soon came to question whether God were indeed good and gracious, or whether there could be any God, who governed such a world. Let these men listen to a child nurtured in the Christian scriptures. “By one man’s disobedience sin entered into the world,

and death by sin, and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned.” What plainer or further information can be desired?

Mankind have always found themselves tempted and carried on by their lusts and passions to offend God, by transgressing that law, (whatever it might be,) under which they lived. *But who among them could tell the means by which they could be reconciled to the offended Deity?* Not one. Infinite were the devices and fancies of superstition, to effect such reconciliation; but all in vain. It must have been dropped “and let alone for ever” by them; whereas every child with us knows, that Christ has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and is become the author of salvation to all who believe in him, and walk according to that belief.

At a certain time we die—Our bodies are laid in the earth, and moulder in the dust. *And what is to befall them afterwards?* Where is the wise man of the world, that can give us instruction and assurance on this point? “Son of man, can these dry bones live?” is a question *not to be answered out of the Christian school.* In that school, any child can answer it. “Now is Christ risen from the dead, and become the first fruits of them that sleep. For as by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. The hour is coming, in which all that are in the grave shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.” “Had Jesus Christ delivered no other declaration than this last,” says an ex-

cellent writer, "He had pronounced a message of inestimable importance, and well worthy of that splendid apparatus of prophecy and miracles, with which his mission was introduced and attested; a message, in which the wisest of mankind would rejoice to find an answer to their doubts, and rest to their enquiries." The observation is just and noble. And yet such a message, one of the heathen sages, were he now living, might receive by the first child he met in the street.

In this manner, to silence false philosophy and pretended wisdom, has God "ordained strength out of the mouth of babes and sucklings," while by them are acknowledged and proclaimed the most concerning truths, which none of the philosophers of Greece and Rome could discover—the creation and redemption of the world—the origin and abolition of evil—the resurrection of the dead, and the final judgment. These are the points in which mankind long wanted and wished to be informed. Yet many have been the scoffs and snares thrown out by unbelievers against the Gospel, as being the religion of women and children. Never surely was wit worse employed. For if the religion be in itself true and excellent, it can receive no prejudice from the circumstance of being embraced and cultivated by women and children. Just the contrary; since if God ever vouchsafed a religion to the world, it must be adapted to either sex and every age. Christianity is that religion, and glories in being so.

HORNE.

On the Penitent Woman at the feet of Jesus. 7 Luke, 37, 38.

THIS history affords the most gracious encouragement to all, whate-

ver may have been the nature or degree of their offences against God, to seek his mercy by repentance.—Often it is not sufficient for the guilty that they have had his general promise: "Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out." They require it to be supported by example, before the trembling and self-reproaching heart can rest upon it.—Here is the example of one, who may be ranked among the chief of sinners, who notwithstanding, was received by the Saviour, with infinite benignity.

Not unfrequently, those who have offended highly, when they come to be convinced of their sins, are ready to despair of the mercy of Heaven. The sentiments of their own unworthiness so profoundly penetrate them—the apprehension of the justice and indignation of God against sin, so alarm and terrify them, that they have not composure of mind sufficient to turn a calm and believing view on the merits of the Redeemer, and the all prevailing atonement of the Cross. They are ready to conclude that *the summer is past, the harvest is ended, and they are not saved.* Ah! why should you unnecessarily afflict your souls? Behold in the penitent of our Gospel, a monument of Divine Grace, that is calculated to silence all your fears, and is sufficient to introduce the light of pious hope into the darkest, and most troubled bosom.

Others there are, who though they do not doubt of the mercy and promise of God, do notwithstanding, derive the most disconsolate prospects from within themselves. The force of their passions they perceive to be so great, that they can hardly flatter themselves with the hope of being able to bend them under the yoke of religion; their sensibilities to pleasure are so lively and impetu-

ous, that they despair of extirpating them, or making them submit to the painful self-denials of the Gospel. It requires indeed, an arduous conflict to subdue the burning impulses of a heart, too sensible to pleasure, and to divert its force from the gross and turbulent pursuits of sense, to the pure and spiritual enjoyments of piety. But if it be arduous, blessed be God! it is not impossible to the energy of reason, to the power of reflection, to the sacred importunity of prayer. A merciful Saviour also, hath not left the issue of the conflict to our own weakness, but hath graciously promised the aids of His Holy Spirit to those who ask him. "Ask and ye shall receive, seek and ye shall find, knock and it shall be opened unto you" Such dispositions, when regulated by Divine Grace, are commonly distinguished for a tender, lively and affectionate piety;—and are capable perhaps of forming the most amiable and perfect characters in religion. To them probably we owe those noble strains, those impassioned odes, which the royal psalmist of Israel employed in the worship of God; those sacred fervours running through all his divine compositions, that continued to animate the devotion of good men in every age. Let not the strength of your passions then, or the vivacity of your sensibilities to pleasure, make you despair of attaining to a new life, or even of reaching the summits of virtue. Enter speedily and in earnest on the arduous labour, and in this, and in every other duty, the promise of God will still remain to be your consolation, and your aid—"My grace is sufficient for you."

SMITH.

It is hard to live in a constant conflict with one's conscience. This ob-

stacle in the way to Hell is great and almost insuperable. When the sinner would continue his career to Hell, conscience, like the cherubim at the gates of Paradise, meets him with its flaming sword, and turns every way to guard the dreadful entrance into the chambers of death. When a man goes on in the thoughtless neglect of God, and the concerns of eternity, or indulges himself in vice and irreligion, conscience whispers "what will be the end of this course? Is it fit thou shouldst thus treat the blessed God, and the Saviour Jesus Christ? Is it wise to neglect the great work of salvation, and run the risk of eternal ruin?" I may appeal to sinners themselves whether they do not often hear such remonstrances as these from within? Indeed in the hurry and bustle of business and company, and the headlong career of pleasure and amusement, the voice of conscience is not heard. *But you cannot always avoid retirement;* sometimes you must be by yourself, and then you find it hard to close up and guard all the avenues of serious thought. Then conscience insists upon a fair hearing, and enters many a solemn protestation against your conduct, warns you of the consequence, and urges you to take another course. Whatever airs of impious bravery you put on in public, and however boldly you bid defiance to these things, yet in the hours of retirement, do you not find that you are a coward at heart? Is not conscience likely to gain the victory? Are you not obliged to break out into the world, and rally all its forces to your assistance, that you may suppress your conscience? How hard a life is this. The life of the sinner is a warfare, as well as that of a Christian. Conscience is his enemy, always disturbing him; that is, he is himself

an enemy to himself while he continues an enemy to God. Some, indeed, by repeated violences, stun their consciences, and it seems to lie still like a conquered enemy. But this is a conquest fatal to the conquerors. Conscience urges you to your duty and interest, with many sharp goads, and will you still kick against them? O! do you not find this hard? I am sure it would be impossible to a creature under the right conduct of reason and self-love. And before you can be capable of performing this dire exploit with ease, you must have acquired a prodigious gigantic strength in sinning. This is what the mightiest saint upon earth could not dare to do. No—*Conscience is his master*; long did he resist, but now he submits, and he would not incur the displeasure of his conscience for all the world.

DAVIES.

Ingle's Sermons.

A volume of discourses by the late Dr. Ingle of Baltimore, has recently been published, and the profits arising from the sale of them, we are told, will be applied to the support of his orphan children. Among the many valuable sermons to be found in this volume, there are three on "Inconsideration."

Some passages, taken from different parts of these discourses, we now offer to our readers.

"LEVITY and thoughtlessness are inimical to the Christian life. They are traitors in sworn league with temptation. When they are admitted into the camp, alternate triumph and defeat characterize the spiritual warfare. It is carried on with various success. Persevering watchfulness alone can give decisive victory, confer ultimate success, and crown with permanent security. The utility and indispensableness of deep, serious, and solemn thought, is by no means confined to our entrance upon a religious course. They are equally necessary at every stage of our progress. *Godliness is a system of habits*, and the same pious and anxious solicitude is to be

cherished for their continual maintenance, as for their original acquisition.

If you look with attention upon the lives and deportment of persons, in the main good and upright, you find them sometimes reprehensibly indolent and negligent in the concerns of their salvation. It may be that they do not err and stray so far from the paths of Heavenly wisdom as they might, and as the earthly-minded multitude do. But the important question is, *Do they advance?* Do they improve? Negative virtues will not do for the disciple of Jesus. Why is it, that they are not more zealously affected towards the good service in which they have enlisted? *Why is it, that they redeem not more of their time from trifles unworthy the contemplation of a Heaven enlightened Spirit?* It is because they are not sufficiently considerate. This is their radical defect. We need go no further to account for the paucity of their attainments.

The more a christian is addicted to meditation, the more spiritual he becomes; and the more cordially inclined to the various services of religion. "While" the royal Psalmist "was musing," he tells us "the fire burned within him," and his emotions forthwith found utterance.

Brethren, abjure inconsideration. It has a most unpropitious influence on your present peace and satisfaction; and in proportion as it is submitted to, it will disqualify you for the better life of the world to come. Be constant in self-examination, meditation and prayer. Commune with your own hearts, consider your ways, and take heed unto your doings. Remember, that religion is a serious thing, salvation an arduous work; the soul precious beyond cal-

culation; life short, frail and precarious; death certain and near at hand; eternity before you; and a deceitful world *labouring to detain you from its joys.*

Too many there are, it should seem, who pass through life without bestowing a serious thought on the manner in which they conduct themselves, or the result to which their actions and conversation tend. It troubles them to anticipate consequences. They dread the pain of retrospection. "Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, lest his deeds should be reproved." To business and to pleasure he resorts, that he may avoid self-accusation. Amidst the din and bustle of the world, conscience is not heard. From its fascinating dissipations, sober thought retires. The honest and faithful trial of *self*, at the bar of reason, the persons to whom I have referred, dare not abide. It would lead to a condemnation which would be painful, inasmuch as it would demand the immediate amendment of their ways and their doings; the immediate dereliction of cherished iniquities, the immediate divorce of the heart from its idols.

They live as if death were a chimera; as if this were their home, as if their foundation were deeply, strongly, and immovably laid, in a continuing city, walled with everlasting adamant. They go forth in the morning to their labours, or their wonted chace of enjoyment. At every turn badges of mourning remind them, that a Spirit has gone to its dreadful account. But how rarely does the thought occur, even for a moment, "this day may be my last, this very night perhaps, my soul may be required of me." O how do men presume upon a pulse that beats this moment, and may

beat no more. They know not how soon their last breath may go out, the last glimmer of the lamp of life sink into darkness; they are in total ignorance of this, and they will not consider! They sing and dance, and carouse and revel, on the edge of damnation.

O thou Spirit of inconsideration! What ruin dost thou not carry thro' God's moral creation? What sin is it that thou dost not engender? What misery is it that thou dost not inflict? What thanks are not due to thee from the power of darkness, for the souls which thou hast bound in his chains?

In vain has God given you reason, if you will not use it. In vain has He recorded his will on the page of inspiration, if you will not study it. In vain does He address you in the words of our Saviour Jesus Christ, and of the Holy Ghost, if you will not lend a patent and attentive hearing. Let me council you to seek after God, and to keep Him continually in your thoughts. Consult the end of your being, and the true felicity of your nature. Think seriously on your general course of conduct, and the result to which your actions and conversation tend. Have respect unto the recompence of reward. Meditate much upon the ultimate issues of things; of death—judgment—heaven—hell—eternity.

Inconsideration deadens the moral sensibilities. It renders people, criminally and dangerously indifferent to the great salvation of the Gospel. It reduces and detains them under bondage to corrupt affections. It contributes more than any other thing, perhaps, to the victories of temptation. It betrays them into refuges of lies, and encourages them to build their confidence on the most deceptive foundations.

To persons who will not permit themselves to think—to reflect—to be serious—reason ceases to be a light—the bible becomes a dead letter, and the occurrences of Providence so many fortuitous accidents, without guidance and without design. What can he know of the divine Being or his works or ways who never turns his contemplations upon these noblest of objects? What can she know of herself, who is always abroad in quest of what may not immediately concern her, and seldom or never at home, exploring her own heart or meditating on the end and aim of her existence?

How can we reach the conscience wrapped up in the security of indifference, or diverted from our appeal by the seductions of unreflecting levity? Unless we can prevail upon the sinner to make a solemn pause and deliberately enquire what that thing is which we call sin, and which we affirm to be exceedingly sinful, and in the divine view abominable and detestable; unless we can prevail upon him impartially to scrutinize his own actions; unless we can prevail upon him to open his eyes and fix his thoughts on the perilous issues of unrepented vice; vain is the hope that we may bring him into the fold of salvation, or reclaim him from sinful habits. *He will be unconscious of alleged guilt. He will be insensible to threatened misery.* The longer he indulges himself in the absence of serious thought, the more difficult it will become to work upon his apprehensions. *The susceptibility of which at first, the operations were but dormant, will at length be extinct, and what began in lethargy will end in death.*

It is not uncommon to find persons leaning with full and mistaken reliance, on the great atonement of the gospel. They have been intro-

duced into the church by baptism. They have never renounced their creed, and feel no disposition to renounce it. And are they not told, that whoever believeth on the Son of God shall not perish but have everlasting life? Would they but read and reflect, surely they would learn that *there is such a thing as a creed of no significance, as to their acceptance in the sight of heaven.*

You have sometimes heard of fundamental errors, and damnable heresies, in doctrine. How much soever these are to be deprecated, they are not more pernicious, I am well persuaded, than the error of having no doctrine, the heresy of having no thought.

Put forth the exertions of an honest and resolute mind, and doubt not of the propitious co-operation of the Spirit of God, He is never wanting to those who are not wanting to themselves. If you make vigorous efforts to fix your attention on the realities of religion and the eternal world, he will crown these efforts with success. What great works may not He do, who has Omnipotence working in him, both to will and to do? Although the difficulties attendant in the first instance upon the duty which I am enforcing, may present it in a repulsive attitude, this will not long continue. As you proceed in it, it will acquire facility. It will assume a more winning form. New habits will beget new tastes, and perseverance in sober reflection give you at length a disrelish for inconsiderate levity.

If you will suffer yourselves to be prevailed on, to think upon your ways, then and not before will you exhibit to Christ, and his Church, that reformation which is unto life, and which shall never be repented of; then and not before, will the spell

in which corruption has bound you, be broken, and your eyes will be open to behold your chains and your deliverer; your guilt and your propitiation; your misery and your advocate; your danger and your shield; your ignorance and your teacher; your helplessness and your supporter; your indigence and your portion; your dependance and your God.

Do not allow yourselves to imagine for one moment, that Heaven is to be gained by the careless and the inconsiderate. No; they that forget God shall surely be turned into Hell. Those hopeless regions where the impenitent suffer the vengeance of eternal fire, could disclose many a sad tale of *inconsideration*, and many an awful catastrophe of unthinking sin.

From Saurin on the Delay of Conversion.

SEIZE the present moment, commence without delay the work of conversion. Do you stop because of its difficulties? O but if you knew—if you knew *the gift of God*—if you knew the joy of a man transformed into the image of his Maker, and who daily engraves on his heart some new trait of the all-perfect Being. If you knew the consolations of a Christian who seeks his God in prayer, who minglest his voice with the voice of Angels, and begins on earth the sacred exercises which shall one day constitute his eternal felicity! If you knew the joy that succeeds the bitterness of repentance, when the sinner returning from his folly prostrates himself at the feet of a merciful God, and receives at the throne of grace from the Saviour of the world, a discharge of all his sins! If you knew the raptures of a soul persuaded of its salvation; which places all its hope upon an anchor sure and stedfast,

which has a foretaste of the never ending joys of Heaven; Ah! why defer so glorious a task? Why delay one moment to seek this peace, these transports, this resurrection, this foretaste of Paradise?

The consequences of our present conduct, according to the Scriptures, are so vast, that if there were only a bare possibility of their truth, it would be madness to run the risk of rejecting them for the sake of gaining the whole world. What then is it, when we have such unanswerable demonstrations, that they are the word of God, and cannot reasonably doubt of it for a moment, to disobey the commands and neglect the salvation, revealed in it for the veriest trifle that can be proposed to us? Especially as it may be shown that (besides the eternal consequences) the firm belief of the scriptures and the conscientious obedience, which true faith produces, will render a man happier in this present life, even amidst trials and self-denying services, than any other man can be made, by all the pleasures, wealth, power and honour which the world can bestow on him.

Seeing that the Bible may be unanswerably proved to be the word of God, we should reason from it, as from self evident principles or demonstrated truths: for “his testimony is sure, making wise the simple.”

As it is the sick who alone know how to value a physician, the debtor a surety, and the criminal a pardon; so it is the awakened conscience alone which will embrace a religion, calculated to humble the pride and mortify the corruptions as well as relieve the wants of man.